

Only a New Classical Period Can Save Humanity from a Dark Age

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

The following is the prepared text of the May 27 keynote speech to a conference of the Schiller Institute and International Caucus of Labor Committees in Bad Schwalbach, Germany. Subheads have been added.

Lyndon LaRouche developed yesterday, as he has repeatedly done before, that only if the population returns to Classical thinking, can we avoid catastrophe. The first problem we have to deal with, is that the vast majority of the people is completely dominated by “popular opinion,” which is nothing else than the *vox populi* of ancient Rome, which essentially collapsed into a Dark Age, because the empire lost its fitness to survive, largely because of rotten values associated with the predatory mentality associated with the *vox populi*.

Today we are faced with exactly the same danger. Rome used “bread and circuses”; today, the population is brainwashed by mass entertainment. The fact that people in several European countries swallow this “Big Brother” program, modelled openly on George Orwell’s *1984*, adds insult to injury. Then, you have the unbelievable banality, perversion, and brutality of Hollywood movies, deadly video games, full of blood and Gore, and a population immersed in the fantasyland of “wellness” and the fun society.

In reality, we are de facto already in a new Dark Age. We are not only experiencing a global crisis, but an entire period of history, an epoch, is over, and only a huge shock and coordinated action for a new world economic order can prevent global chaos and a new fascism. And indeed, we should be quite alarmed at the fact, that apart from the danger of an uncontrolled collapse of the financial system, the threat of new fascist dictatorships is likely to arise in the same or actually much worse way, than occurred in the 1930s. This can take the form of “rebel leaders” fighting for “independence”; it can take the form of dictators implementing “liberal” economic policies; and, it can take the form of police-states with total surveillance of their citizens, privatized prisons for slave labor, and a mass elimination lives considered “unworthy to be lived,” through mass application of the death penalty, living wills, denial of health care, homelessness, etc.

This new fascism has many ingredients of the old fascisms, which are easily recognizable, but there are also new phenomena, which have not yet properly been conceptualized. It is necessary to do a clinical investigation of what is

wrong with the mind-set and the method of thinking, which has to be changed. As I will demonstrate, the present *vox populi* is much closer to clinical insanity, than people are willing to accept. One area, where it should be the easiest to see the identity of the old and new fascist policies, is the privatization of health care in the United States, in the so-called health maintenance organizations (HMOs), where accountants and managers dedicated to a “shareholder-value” society, and the mindless greed of speculators, decide who is a “useless eater” and what is an “unworthy life.”

This is the direction in which [Public Health Minister] Andrea Fischer, the most incompetent German cabinet minister of all time, is going, and this is the case with 50,000 involuntary euthanasia deaths per year in Holland.

And now it is obvious, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that what we have always insisted upon is true: that the International Monetary Fund, by forcing Third World countries to cut health and other social expenses, has practiced genocide on a large scale, for decades.

The AIDS Threat to National Security

In January of this year, a CIA report was published, stating that the global AIDS pandemic represents a national security threat to the United States. Exactly what Mr. LaRouche said in 1985 (actually, in a general form, already in 1973, even before AIDS was discovered)! He then was denounced and prosecuted.

It is indeed a security threat, not only to the United States, but to the whole world! This one area shows clearly, that we are in a Dark Age. And, one year ago, there was a report by the World Health Organization, which said that there is evidence that the world has dangerously underestimated the threat of bacteria and viruses to national security and economic growth, and soon the world may miss the opportunity to protect people from this risk.

This report states, in an unprecedented tone of urgency, that the world has only a very short “window of opportunity” left to make dramatic progress in controlling the six leading killer diseases, and protecting the world against new diseases:

“The cost of failure will be high; increased drug resistance and the emergence of new bacteria and viruses could make the control of infectious diseases both scientifically and economically unlikely in the future.”



Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute. The Romantic movement, she argues, was an oligarchical deployment to destroy Classical culture—and to drive people crazy. Its effects can still be seen today, in the degraded nature of Western popular culture.

“It is in the best interest of all countries to support global initiatives to control infectious diseases. Any segment of society that ignores the spread of infections among its neighbors, does so at its own peril. When a country becomes a weak link in the chain of global surveillance and disease control, everyone is affected. . . .

“Smallpox provides a very striking example. If smallpox had not been eradicated in a few remaining countries in 1977, the world might still pay a heavy price today. Unforeseen was the imminent emergence of HIV/AIDS. Immunization with the smallpox vaccine—made from a live weakened virus—would now be *fatal* for many people, whose immune system is impaired by HIV.

“Just a few years’ delay and global eradication of smallpox may have become impossible without the discovery of a new vaccine. Had smallpox not been eradicated, at a cost then totalling \$300 million, it could be among the top six infectious killers in the world today. Without past concerted efforts to fight the disease, smallpox would still cause at least a million deaths per year, costing governments billions of dollars in health care costs. These lessons have been overlooked.

“The progress that the world can make today against infectious diseases may not be possible a decade from now. Increased drug resistance and the unforeseen emergence of new microbes could close the window of opportunity for controlling infectious diseases.”

This is almost an understatement. Multi-drug-resistant forms of diseases are already becoming untreatable in any country, at any price, once the options have been exhausted. It becomes increasingly difficult to develop new antibiotics and other drugs fast enough to replace those, that have become ineffective.

Has there been a crash program to develop new scien-

tific breakthroughs? No!

Has a society which fails to respond to an existential threat lost the moral fitness to survive? Yes!

A Culture of Violence

Let’s look at another aspect of the new Dark Age. We have documented the accelerating use of child-soldiers, with the spread of wars around the globe, as well as child slave labor, child prostitution, the use of children as organ donors. Every day, 50,000 children die of hunger. In the so-called “advanced” sector, we experience the phenomenon of the “new violence.” Children are trained to become mass killers, though video games, modelled on flight simulations used by the military for the training of combat soldiers.

These video games (Pokémon is like an initiation drug) are resulting in an unbelievable brutalization of the minds of helpless children from the age of three on up. Four-

year-old children jump out of a sixth-floor window, because they believe they can fly like a figure in Pokémon. Six-year-old children shoot six-year-olds. The childhood of the children of the world is being stolen. They do not *have* a childhood.

The Americal Medical Association already in 1972 reported a direct link between violence in the media and the actual increase of killings around the world. Does a society, whose children do not have a childhood and where the idea of the sacredness of human life is unheard of, have a future? Then, there is what Lyn calls the generational crisis, where the eco-fascist ideas of the ’68 generation are now topped by the unbridled predator capitalists of the Internet firms, social darwinist millionaires of Generation X, who do not mind if their short-lived riches are built on accelerating racism and the marginalization of the poor. Whoever does not see that there is the danger of a new fascism, potentially much worse than that of Hitler, is blind and evil.

Self-Delusion: The Rise of Hitler

It is most instructive to compare the present self-delusions, with the complete illusion and misjudgment at the time immediately before Hitler’s takeover. After the sensational election successes of the Nazis on Sept. 14, 1930, people were stunned, and looked for reasons for this success. It could really not be attributed to either the program or leadership of the NSDAP [Nazi Party]. Why should Hitler be something special, among the 400 groups of the Conservative Revolution? People were full of contempt for the “intellectual shallowness” of the Nazis.

The Berlin press characterized their tirades as most banal, hollow charlatanry, saying nothing, or else what other agitators for the Conservative Revolution had said already.

Then, after the major losses of the Nazis in the Reichstag [parliament] election of Nov. 6, 1932, and the crisis around Strasser in December 1932, the general assessment was, that the Nazis were only a passing phenomenon, which would break apart by their inner contradictions. This was ideologically motivated wishful thinking. All the information concerning the Nazis' intentions was there, but what was missing was the ability to conceptualize the new phenomena.

Still, on Jan. 15, 1933, Reichschancellor Kurt von Schleicher said: "Mr. Hitler does not represent a problem any more. His movement has ceased to be a political danger. The whole matter is resolved and a sorrow of the past."

Only a few took *Mein Kampf* and Hitler's speeches seriously. Different political groups had different ideological reasons for their misjudgment. The Communists, influenced by Georg Lukacs, believed that the "actual danger" would be the "social fascism of the Social Democracy," which would be much more efficient in implementing the "fascist dictatorship of the financial oligarchy."

The Social Democrats believed, that since they had survived Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm, nothing could be so hard. And even after Hitler's takeover, people raised no special alarm—a few voices excepted—and there was also no special outcry coming from abroad.

But Hitler was very clear about the utopia of a "globalization" of his power. The racism and the glorification of a supposed Germanic super-race were out in the open, and there was a total openness about the social darwinist intent to eliminate the "unfit" and "unworthy."

Where did this come from?

What was the significance of Joseph Goebbels's radio address of April 1, 1933, in which he declared: "Now we have eliminated the year 1789 from history!"

Romanticism Against the Classical Idea

"The ideas of 1789"—that was the synonym for the enemy-image held by the Conservative Revolutionaries since the period of the American Revolution, of which the French Revolution was essentially a failed version, and since the time of German Classical culture, of the Weimar Classic.

One has to consider the entire evolution of ideas of the Conservative Revolution, which include the mythologies of the Romantic movement, as a fundamental counterattack against the German Classics, all the way through Nietzsche, Wagner, the "Romantic" protest movement of the *Jugendbewegung* [Youth Movement] before World War I, as an essentially uninterrupted tradition, and then consider, how the Romantic-initiated cultural pessimism of the World War I period was shaped though the terrible experience of that war. All this went into the "heroic nihilism" of the Conservative Revolutionaries such as Ernst Jünger, Oswald Spengler, Moeller van den Brück, and others, who shaped the ideological environment around the Nazis.

It is these ideas, which, in a new form, are at work at the present, which represent a mortal threat to human civilization.

The Romantic movement, as it appeared in Germany, was a conscious countermovement against the German Classics; it took slightly different forms in other European countries, and was a powerful assault against the very identity of that which is called "European culture."

It was with the emergence of Greek Classical thinking, from Homer, through the great tragedians, until finally with Plato, that the scientific knowledge was established, that the world is not governed by magic and demons, which man can only answer with superstition and manipulation, but rather that man is capable of formulating valid ideas about the physical universe, that the universe was lawfully organized by the *Logos*, and that the reflection of reason and truth is beauty. In this sense, European culture was a tremendous victory of man over the barbarism of the Mesopotamian, Babylonian, and other empires. It was the birth of human dignity and human rights.

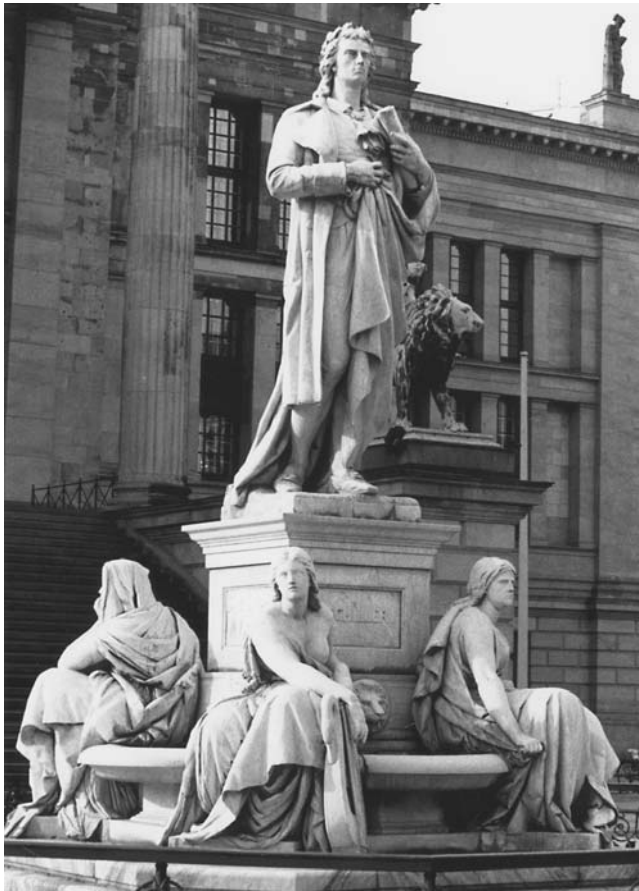
After Leibniz had revived the Platonic-Christian tradition after the Thirty Years' War, and developed its scientific method to a new level, and after especially Gotthold Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn had combatted the evil influence of the English and French Enlightenment, and in this way prepared the ground for the Weimar Classical period, the collaborator of especially Schiller, Goethe, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and their friends established the high ground in Classical culture up to that point.

Never was there a higher ideal of man, a more noble idea of man in his freedom, each individual capable of becoming a beautiful soul and a genius, than was celebrated by the works of these men. And never was the principle of Classical composition of works in drama, poetry, music, or sculpture brought to a higher level.

The historical moment when this occurred, was just after the success of the American Revolution, the establishment of the first true republican sovereign nation-state, the biggest defeat for the British Empire and the oligarchy of that time. And furthermore, it was the understanding, and not only of Presidents John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and James Monroe, that the concept of the sovereign nation-state, committed to the general welfare and the inalienable rights of all citizens, was supposed to be spread over the globe, so that sovereign nations could peacefully live together in a community of principle. These were the political ideas which inspired Schiller and all republican forces in Europe.

When the representatives of the Weimar Classic and the Classical composers, above all others Beethoven, crowned these noble ideas with songs and compositions, which established eternal and universal laws of art, and furthermore, when Wilhelm von Humboldt and the humanists of his time proceeded to make these principles the foundation of a general education system, the oligarchy was confronted with the biggest challenge ever: True republics, and Classical thinking in the general population, were spreading!

I am convinced, that the Romantics were not really romantics, but agents of the Holy Alliance and oligarchy of their



Statue of Friedrich Schiller in Berlin. Schiller's works represented the highest achievement of Classical culture, and he was in continual combat with the virus of Romanticism.

time. Oh, sure, they had their sincere romantic feelings—and what that means, we will see shortly—and their romantic fantasies, but if they were not agents from the beginning, a lot of them for sure were picked up as agents in the process. Friedrich Schlegel, for example, later worked openly for Metternich and Gentz. De la Motte Fouqué articulated the ideas of the Restoration and the racial superiority of the *Geburtsadel* [hereditary nobility] as the justification for feudal class society. And Johann Heinrich Voss was probably right, that Fritz von Stolberg was picked up by the oligarchy and reactionary elements in the Church.

In any case, one has to consider, that the Weimar Classic, and especially the works of Schiller, represented the highest level of reason, expressed the most profound Platonic ideas with poetic beauty, and the contributions of all of this challenged the population to the highest level of thought and consciousness. And the demand of the time was how to realize the great ideas of the American Revolution in Europe, how to build the greatest piece of art, to build “political freedom,” as Schiller said.

And what do the Romantics propose? They glorify exactly what was essentially a Dark Age; they present an historically

completely falsified image of the Middle Ages: knighthood, the emperors, misused Nordic mythologies, inexplicable mystical events, an infinite longing for death, the unrestrained living-out of psychological disorders, just to name a few elements of their irrational mix.

The poet Heinrich Heine asks in his essay “The Romantic School,” which is a sarcastic polemic against its proponents: Is it not very strange, that such an eerie curiosity motivates people to look into the graves of the past? This always happens in extraordinary periods, at the end of an epoch, or shortly before a catastrophe.

He concludes that the Romantics in Germany had quite a different purpose than those in France, and that the effect that they were able to have on the broad masses, threatened the freedom and the future of his Fatherland.

I will introduce you now to some of the key Romantics, some of their works and how they continue to be influential at the present, and contrast their way of thinking with Classical principles.

The Schlegels vs. Schiller and Goethe

In the second half of the 1790s, when Schiller and Goethe had started the fruitful decade of their collaboration, a group of young poets and writers gathered in Jena, and in the beginning they were in contact with both Schiller and Goethe. August Wilhelm Schlegel, a student of Gottfried Bürger, whose poetic populism Schiller had criticized so sharply, collaborated for a short period with Schiller’s publications *Almanach* and *Horen*. He married Caroline Böhmer, who later left him to marry F.W.J. von Schelling, the “philosopher of nature.” Soon August Wilhelm’s brother Friedrich arrived with his lover and later wife, Dorothea Veit, a daughter of Moses Mendelssohn, who unfortunately did not walk in her father’s footsteps.



August Wilhelm Schlegel

After a short period of contact, Schiller cut all ties to the Schlegels, because he absolutely could not stand the impertinent and overbearing behavior of the brothers, especially Friedrich. Friedrich had attacked Schiller in the publication of the royal director of the orchestra (Kapellmeister) in Berlin, Friedrich Reichardt. Schiller and Goethe started the “Xenien” fight, many episodes of which

were directed against the Romantic camp.

The Schlegels founded a direct counter-publication to the *Horen*, which only appeared from 1798 to 1800; it was called the *Athenäum*, and it became the flagship publication for their school. In it wrote also Schleiermacher, Novalis (Friedrich

Freiherr von Hardenberg), Fouqué's teacher A.L. Hülsen, and the sister of Ludwig Tieck, who, besides Novalis and the Schlegels, was one of four in the original core group. It was not least the intrigues of Caroline, whom Schiller called "Dame Lucifer," who organized the majority of the Romantics into an openly hostile position to Schiller. She challenged the two brothers to become "critical dictators of Germany."

Novalis, whose 15-year-old bride had died, was the first example of a "poet" writing out of an inflated fantasy and longing for death, where he wanted to follow his bride. His "Hymns to the Night" are the product of a morbid fascination with death.

Another major document by Novalis, "Christianity and Europe," despite the fact that, on Goethe's advice, it was not published in the *Athenäum*, formulated for the first time the strange theory, according to which the Middle Ages was the time of a unified, powerful Europe, where the good emperor and respected, commanding priests would tame the wildest, most greedy tendencies. This wise head of the Church also curbed the dangerous development of knowledge—lest the people should become accustomed to despising everything great and miraculous, and regarding it as mere causal lawfulness.

Novalis's tract went too far for Goethe, who, after all, was steeped in the Greek Classics and 3,000 years of European civilization, and who had defended Kepler and attacked Newton.

August Wilhelm vacillated between his efforts to propitiate Goethe for his own purposes, and to join the attack on the Classics, but he was already in the process of accepting Romantic ideas. Friedrich completely went along with Novalis, and later converted to his own strange brand of Catholicism, on this basis. Schlegel never wrote poetry, but from 1801 to 1804 he read lectures in Berlin about the history of Romantic literature. Essentially, they attacked the Classics and praised all poets who followed neither the rules of the Greeks nor those of the French. Schlegel naturally glorified the German Middle Ages, the "Minnesänger" and the *Nibelungenlied*. He indeed



Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenburg (Novalis)



Friedrich Schlegel

managed to portray a rather sinister period in a glorious light. Unfortunately, he provided the theoretical foundations for the Romantics.

In the meantime, Caroline left him and married Schelling. August Wilhelm, for the next 16 years, lived with Madame de Staël, the daughter of French Finance Minister Necker, banned from France by Napoleon. Schiller was absolutely appalled by her, Goethe said, such that when she left Weimar, he felt as if he had survived a terrible disease.

With the help of August Wilhelm, she wrote a book, *About Germany*, on literary life in Germany, which is full of her and Schlegel's Romantic views. They had a very strange relationship, because, despite the fact that she had numerous affairs with other men, he signed a letter to her in 1805 with the words, "Your slave." When he tried to marry another woman after she died, this woman left him after the first night, and her parents got the marriage annulled, with the argument that it never was consummated; Heine reported about all of this with funny references to the missing parts of Osiris.

Friedrich Schlegel, who originally studied the ancient Classics and philosophy, in 1797 went to Berlin, where he waged polemics against especially German Classical literature, socializing with Johann Friedrich Reichardt, whose house became a center for followers of Romantic ideas. Friedrich wrote in his magazines *Deutschland* and *Lyseum*. He also wrote the unspeakable novel *Lucinde*, in which he praises man as "the serious beast," and hails the "godlike art of laziness," the right to be impertinent, and the pleasures of free love. August Wilhelm was the first to praise the power of the *Nibelungenlied*, which had been rediscovered by J.J. Bödmer in 1757, in his lectures. He insisted that it was comparable to Homer's *Iliad*—an idea that Schiller and Goethe completely rejected. They were disgusted by the whole Nordic mythology, whose gods were more incomprehensible ghosts, than godly figures.

Schiller, in particular, concluded that Nordic mythology was too closely tied to the particular time and national interest. Greek mythology, on the other hand, alone could address the eternal, timeless, and universal man.

How right Schiller would prove to be! This conscious effort by the Romantics to replace the reference point of ancient Greek ideas with the Nordic mythologies, would directly lead to the German catastrophe. In another location, Schiller worried about what all of these Romantic ideas would lead to.

Friedrich wrote a major treatise about northern poetry, while the main works of de la Motte Fouqué were devoted to the Nibelungen saga and the idea of the Nordic heroes. Josef Görres took up the Lohengrin story and made further investigations into the Siegfried saga. In 1826, the *Nibelungenhort* was performed on stage for the first time, and naturally Richard Wagner then used the mythologies as a reservoir for his operas, *Parzival*, *Lohengrin*, and *Tristan und Isolde*.

With the glorification of the Middle Ages by the Romantics, these mythologies were misused to become the mythical

notion of the *Volk*, and under the Nazis the *Nibelungenlied* became the anthem of the unconditional followers of the “Führer.”

The main novel by Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, starts with the following sentences: “The young man lay restless on his bed, and thought about the stranger and his tales. ‘It is not the idea of the treasures, which has awakened such an unspeakable longing within me,’ he said to himself; ‘I am distant from all thoughts of greed. ‘But I do long to catch a glimpse of the blue flower. I am obsessed by it, and I cannot compose or think of anything else. I have never felt this way before: It is as if I had seen it before in my dreams, or or I had slept my way into another world.’ ”

This motif of the “blue flower” became the metaphor for the Romantic. And what was it? This strange brew of the Edda, and the glorification of the powers to be.

There is another whole dimension to the Romantic writings. On one side, they are mostly very simple-minded,



Richard Wagner

written in an extremely simplistic style. As Heine writes about Tieck, he had “swallowed down so much from the popular books and poems of the Middle Ages, that he almost became a child again, and blossomed downward into that babbling simplicity, which Madame de Staël took so much trouble to admire.”

Concerning Tieck’s “Der blonde Eckhart” and “Der Runenberg,” Heine writes further:



Ludwig Tieck

“This poem is suffused with a mysterious inwardness, a special secret with nature, especially the plants and the realm of the stones. The reader feels as though he were in an enchanted forest.”

Let me tell you briefly the story of the “Fair Eckhart,” a knight who lives in the solitude of a wood, with his wife, Bertha. A visitor comes, Walter, who befriends Eckhart, and one night he urges Walter to listen to Bertha’s story of her childhood:

When she was eight years old, she was brutally beaten by her father; she runs away through mysterious woods and mountains, meets an old woman who takes her into her house. Bertha has to take care of the bird and the dog, and eventually

the woman tells her the secret: that the bird lays an egg every day, with a pearl or precious stone in it. She adds, that if Bertha does her duty, she will do well, if not, punishment will overtake her, sooner or later. When she is 14, Bertha decides to steal the bird and the pearls. She chains the dog in the house, knowing that he would have to die as a result. She sells the stones and keeps wandering, until she reaches the village of her parents, who, however, had died three years before. The bird starts to sing, and she strangles him. Then she marries the knight Eckhart.

This is the end of her story, and Walter comments: “I can imagine, how you fed little Strohmi.”

Eckhart becomes totally paranoid, that Walter would tell their secret. Bertha gets very sick. She is terrified: How could Walter know that “Strohmi” was the name of the dog? Eckhart goes out and shoots Walter dead. Bertha dies before Eckhart returns.

He befriends another knight, Hugo von Wolfsberg. Eckhart is paranoid, that his friend loves him only because he knows of his guilt. All of a sudden, Hugo’s face turns into that of Walter. Eckhart fears that he is going insane and runs away. He runs into the old woman, who says, “So, are you bringing me my bird, my dog? See, injustice finds its punishment. I was Walter, I was Hugo, and Bertha is your sister, whom her father, a knight, had given to foster parents to be raised.” Eckhart goes insane and dies.

Now, this is clearly the story of a child, beaten by a bipolar father, who develops a multiple personality disorder, combined with paranoid fits and schizophrenia.

As I will show, this fascination with insanity is a very characteristic feature of nearly all the Romantics.

In “Der Runenberg,” the hero, Christian, walks around in a strange mountainous landscape.

“He thoughtlessly pulled at an exposed root, and suddenly he was shocked to hear a muffled cry from below; the cry continued to reverberate underground, in plaintive tones, until it finally became mournfully lost in the distance. The sound pierced his heart to the core; it gripped him, as if he had unknowingly touched the wound that was inflicting so much pain on the dying body of nature, that she wished to perish from it. He jumped up, and wanted to flee, since he had heard awful things about the strange mandrake root, which, if ripped out, utters such blood-curdling sounds that it drives men mad with its screaming.”

Now, we finally know what’s wrong with Andrea Fischer — she tried to pull out mandrake roots! Not only Novalis talked with plants, so does Prince Charles!

In “Runenberg,” Christian, who otherwise gives a detailed clinical description of his own schizophrenic nightmares, says:

“No, I quite distinctly remember that it was a plant which first acquainted me with the full scope of the earth’s misfortunes; only since that time, have I understood the sighs and complaints which are discernible everywhere in nature, if one

takes the trouble to listen. In plants, herbs, flowers, it is only one great wound which stirs and moves: They are the corpse of earlier, magnificent stone-worlds, and they appear before our eyes in a state of horrible putrefaction.”

Here you have it! Now we finally know how the Greenies know that the forests are sick! All you need is a schizophrenic who longs for death, and the woods will tell him!

The Romantics Live Out Insanity

Tieck was not the only one, in whom this insanity and indulgence in nature were connected. Heine said about Novalis and E.T.A. Hoffmann, that the similarity between them was, that their poetry was actually a sickness. Heine wrote:

“Hoffmann saw ghosts everywhere, but life itself rejected him as a pathetic spook. He felt as if he himself had become a ghost, and all of nature was, for him, a misshapen mirror, one in which he only could see, distorted a thousandfold, his own funeral bier; and his works are nothing other than a terrifying, 20-volume-long cry of fear.”

Hoffmann only dealt with the “night-side of Nature,” talking about the devil, graves, insanity.

But not only Heine recognized that the Romantics were living out insanity; so did Goethe, who said to Eckermann, that the Classical is the healthy mind, while the Romantic is the insane one.

The interesting aspect is, that this insanity had a method. Some contemporary authors admit, that modern psychiatry has its roots in E.T.A. Hoffmann!

So writes Arnold Hauser, in his *The Philosophy of Art History*: “Psychoanalysis is itself a kind of Romanticism; it is unthinkable without the Romantic frame of mind and the Romantic inheritance. Freud’s real spiritual ancestors are among the Romantics, and the presupposition of a psychoanalytical approach to mental phenomena are among the fundamental implications of the Romantic outlook on life. Psychoanalysis regards, as did Romanticism, the unconscious as origin, if not a higher, at least of a more genuine, more perennial form of truth.”

Its principle of “free association,” which is not only the foundation of the theory, but also its criterion of spontaneous mental functioning, is a variant of the “inner voice” of Romanticism. The very idea of convertibility of mental energies and attitudes, on which the whole structure of the psychoanalytical doctrine, with its reaction formations, defense mechanisms, rationalizations, and sublimations, is based, is unthinkable without the experience of Romantic frustrations and a constant of compensations, in a period that Freud himself has described as that of “Man’s discontent with civilization.”

Hoffmann clearly was afraid of going crazy himself; in any case, he was in contact with some of the leading doctors of his time, Adalbert Friedrich Marcus and Friedrich Speyer; he visited insane asylums, read the relevant psychiatric literature, and occupied himself with literature about mesmerism (hypnosis) and somnambulism. He used these subjects as

literary material.

In the tale “Der Sandmann,” the student Nathaniel has a pair of spectacles, with which he can see two different kinds of realities. Perception through these spectacles sets a fantastic inner life in motion, which lets him see the other world in a completely different way than everybody else. Insanity sets in; the schizophrenic can’t get these two views together.

In “Prizessin Brombilla,” he describes a chronic dualism; in “Die Serapionsbrüder,” he describes the world of a crazy person, who lives in his own mental world, which is logical in itself, and, as long as he is not disturbed, he lives a closed off, but happy life.

It is exactly that approach — that one should not try to cure the mentally ill, but let them live a human life, where they are in peace with their disease — which was later taken by R.D. Laing in his book *The Divided Self*, and his “anti-psychiatry” institution at Kinsley Hall. R.D. Laing was the expert of the British Tavistock Institute in psychomimetic drugs, by studying psychotic states within people and then trying to imitate them with synthetic drugs. He was part of the circle of the Bertrand Russell-H.G. Wells, whose program was on how to induce insanity into the population as a matter of control. The experiments with the Heidelberg Patients’ Collective, out of which part of the so-called first generation of the Baader-Meinhof Gang was recruited, were part of this, as were the experiments with LSD on U.S. campuses, the infamous MK-Ultra project.

An Earlier Oligarchical Project?

Was the Romantic school an earlier, similar approach by the oligarchy, to drive the population insane?

It is noteworthy, that Goethe quotes the report in the English *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, which describes Hoffmann’s sickness as a fact:

“They [Hoffmann’s works] have barely as much apparent content, as would at all events be granted to the insanities of a lunatic; they are the feverish dreams of a sick and impressionable brain: Even if these dreams might often excite us with their amazing feats or surprise us with their oddity, we could never give them more than momentary recognition. Truly, Hoffmann’s inspirations often resemble fantasies which are produced by an excessive use of opium, and which more require the assistance of a medical doctor, than of a literary critic.”

The English author advises as a treatment for Hoffmann, the then-customary bleeding, laxatives, and emetics.

Goethe comments on the report:

“We cannot recommend highly enough to our readers, the rich content of this article. For, what faithful participant, who cares for his Nation’s education, has not seen with sadness, that the pathological works of this sick man have had their effects upon Germany for many years now, and has seen what aberrations have been injected into healthy minds under the guise of being significant and beneficial?”

In the original report, it says:

“Thus was the inventor, of at least the first distinguished artist, who exhibited the fantastic array of supranatural grotesques in his compositions, so nearly on the verge of actual insanity, as to be afraid of the being which his own fancy had created. It is no wonder, that a mind so vividly accessible to the influence of imagination, so little under the influence of sober reason, such a numerous train of ideas should occur, in which fancy had a large share and reason none at all. . . . There is much reason to think that his life was shortened not only by his mental malady, of which it is the appropriate quality to impede digestion and destroy the healthy exercise of the powers of the stomach, but also by the indulgence to which he had recourse in order to secure himself against the melancholy, which operated so deeply upon the constitution of his mind.”

Heine wrote about all of this:

“If one wants to get an idea of the great mob of poets who at that time were imitating the poems of the Middle Ages in every conceivable verse-form, one must pay a visit to the Charenton insane asylum.” And: “I have just drawn a comparison of the German Parnassus of that time, to Charenton.”

Whatever the Romantic movement was—an organic explosion or a concocted operation—its victory occurred after the Congress of Vienna and the Restoration. Friedrich Schlegel, by then in the service of Metternich, praised the ouster of Wilhelm von Humboldt as a Minister in Berlin, as the victory of a just cause.

Another blatant propagandist of the Restoration was Baron de la Motte Fouqué, whose entire *oeuvre* was designed to stabilize the power structures of the oligarchy, by continuously emphasizing the natural supremacy of the inherited nobility and the God-given nature of feudal caste society, which happily would be accepted by the lower subjects.

In “Undine,” the story of a sea-nymph, he writes: “When the sumptuous dinner was finished, and dessert was served, the doors remained open, according to the good, old custom in German lands, so that the common people, too, could look on and enjoy the merriment of their masters.”

Here you have the emergence of the myth of the dutiful, submissive spirit, which gratefully accepts and bows in front of the strong knightly spirit! He even went so far as to portray a parallel between the hierarchy of the knights and angels as mediators in society.

Even Eichendorff, who was a Romantic, but essentially a happy person with enormous lyrical talent, was disgusted.

Johann Heinrich Voss, who had translated Homer and the ancient Greeks, led the most heavy attack on the Romantics. In his essay “How Did Fritz von Stolberg Become a Serf?” he used the case of his former friend, Count Stolberg, who, at first, had sympathized with the ideas of freedom of the American Revolution, of Washington and Franklin, who was pulled into the reactionary environment of the Jesuits and

the nobility, and when the question was posed of overcoming feudal class society in practice, he had arguments, which sounded exactly like those of the plantation owners of the Confederacy. The lower class was not yet mature enough to be released, he said, defending the principle of the innate supremacy of the nobility, which he considered a more noble part of mankind, with a sense of honor totally its own, much above the low-level thinking of the non-noble classes, and therefore deserving privileges.



Johann Heinrich Voss

Voss blasts this attitude:

“The incomprehensible things, which one is barely able to wrap one’s mind around! These pretensions to state honors, without the requisite abilities, this greed for the common weal, to which they contribute nothing, this presumption of ancestors whom nobody knows—this is what they call an elevated sense of honor to their own lineage.”

The ‘Religious’ Dimension

But to really understand the strange brew of Romanticism, it is not only the Restoration, the attack on the fundamentals of European identity based on the Greek Classics, the modern mythologies, the insanity, the oligarchism; to really get a flavor, one has to take a look at the religious component, the strange “speech about religion” by Schleiermacher. He writes there:

“What do you call the feeling of an unrequited longing, directed toward some great cause, whose *boundlessness* you are also also conscious of? What is it that grips you, when you see that which is holy most intimately intermingled with that which is profane, and the exalted with what is low and insignificant? And what do you call the mood which occasionally impels you to presuppose this direction, and to search for it everywhere? This not only sometimes grips the Christian, but rather, it is the dominant tone of all religious sentiments: *holy melancholy*—for this is the only term for it that language affords me. It accompanies all joy and all pain, all love and all fear; indeed, . . . it [is] the *fundamental tone* to which everything else is oriented.

“This lovely, sweet melancholy,” the tears, this “incredibly sweet pain,” which “could not be exchanged for all the comforts on earth”—now, this is *really* Romantic!

The idea that “in all of life, it is not much other” than “pulling oneself along in the darkness, along unknown passageways, in quest of shadowy figures which he will probably never succeed in overtaking”—isn’t this what, in the final analysis, is at the bottom of today’s *Zeitgeist*?

And, of course, the “hot tears.” In Fouqué’s “Undine,” it reads:

“He was so saddened to his very soul. [And] the tears welled up to his eyes from his entire soul. . . . He always felt better in his tears; it penetrated his heart like a gently warming glow, and, along with deep, soul-gnawing sorrow, blissful hope swelled into a single, never before experienced feeling.”

Undine, an *Elementargeist* [lesser spirit], is by law condemned to weep her beloved to death, and at his grave, she dissolves in a “silver light fountain” to hold her darling in her loving arms forever.

Again, one has to recall that the Weimar Classic had just established the highest ideal of Classical art, whose fundamental characteristic it was, that the perfected man, man in his universal identity as an expression of the species, was its subject.

For the Romantics, man was not the focal point at all; man was only one element in an endless nature, an infinite, never-ending story, surrounded by the oceans, ether, and the depth of the night.

Schiller had the highest demands on the Classical artist. Especially because poetry has the key to the innermost motions of the soul, the poet or artist in general must first idealize himself to be a perfect human being, before he can dare to move his audience. But also, the subject he presents can not be arbitrary. In his critique of Bürger’s poems, Schiller writes:



Gottfried Bürger

“One of the poet’s indispensable functions is to idealize his object; failing this, he deserves not the name. It is his office, to free all that is excellent about his object (whether that be a physical shape, a sentiment, or an action, either internal or external) from coarser, and even from merely extraneous substances; to gather the beams of perfection scattered

among many objects, into a single beam; to subordinate asymmetrical features to the harmony of the whole; to elevate what is individual and local, into what is universal. All particular ideals which he develops in this fashion, are, as it were, outpourings of an inner ideal of perfection abiding within the poet’s soul.”

Not to be popular by appealing to the low-level taste of the masses, but to playfully pull up the people to the lofty ideals of the poet was his demand. On the contrary, for Novalis, popularity was the highest god.

And how can the poet cause a lawful effect, while respecting fully the freedom of imagination of the audience? In the critique of Mathisson’s poems, Schiller demonstrates that this seemingly contradictory condition can only be met, when the

highest degree of freedom is caused by the highest degree of determination.

For the Romantics, such a destination is immoral and paralyzing. Schleiermacher demands, for example, that every person should represent his unique way, his own specialty, “*his own opinion*,” since only in this way could all options of infinity be represented.

While Schiller and Goethe, in their fruitful cooperation, were struggling to define and find eternally the laws of art and the binding way to realize them, demanding the highest mastery and perfection, the Romantics declared arbitrariness to be the highest law. “Heaven may protect us from eternal works,” said Friedrich Schlegel.

For the Classical poets, each moment contained the simultaneity of eternity. Schiller writes, “The pure moral impulse is directed to the unconditional; for it, there is no time, and the future becomes the present for it, as soon it has to develop necessarily from the present. For unlimited reason, direction is completion, and the way has been travelled, as soon it is embarked upon.” Goethe says to Eckermann: “Every state, and indeed, every moment is of an unlimited value, for it represents eternity.”

The Romantics, on the other hand, do not want to use or measure time in any way. In “Lucinde” it says: “O idleness, idleness! . . . Indeed, one should not so criminally neglect the study of idleness, but rather one should develop it into an art and science, yea, into a religion! To sum it all up: The more divine a human being or a work of man is, the more they come to resemble plants. Among all forms, the latter are the most ethical, and the most beautiful. And without these, the most highly perfected life would be nothing but mere vegetation.”

Now I have it: Andrea Fischer thinks she is the reincarnation of “Lucinde”: She vegetates!

Most revealing also, is the totally opposite view the Classical poets and the Romantics had of the famous sculpture “Laocoön.” Goethe regarded it as the representation of the most noble humanity, because the prudence expressed here is bigger than the pain. Novalis, on the other side, said: “Could we not think of a more all-encompassing, a more merciful moment in Laocoön’s drama, than the antique group of sculptures—perhaps the one, where the highest pain turns into ecstasy, resistance into submission, the great life into stone?”

Schiller wrote the following about ecstasy: “Man in this state is nothing more than a fulfilled moment in time—or rather, he is not this, since his personality is suspended, so long as he is dominated by sensation and is swept along by time.

“Our language has a very fitting expression for this state of selflessness: to be out of oneself (*ausser sich sein*). To return from this state, back to presence of mind, is just as correctly called going into oneself (*in sich gehen*); i.e., to return into one’s self, to recompose one’s personality.”

Hölderlin talks about the “lust of death,” the “wonderful longing toward the abyss.” And Novalis writes: “Life is only



Joan of Arc at Rheims, painting by Ingres, at The Louvre in Paris. In Schiller's play, the story of Joan's (Johanna's) heroism shows that "if you take the divine will as your own, if you become the instrument of world history, you can intervene and change it."

the beginning of death. Life exists for death's sake."

For Schiller, beauty and sublimeness (*Erhabenheit*) of man are victorious over death. For Schiller, freedom is victorious over destiny, therefore, he is always optimistic. He talks about "the great destiny, which elevates man as it crushes him." It is very clear, that Schiller especially dealt with some of the issues the Romantics tried to take up, in his Classical way. Compare, for example, the "sick calf" longing of the Romantics with Schiller's poem "Longing," where the "longing" is overcome in the beautiful last lines:

"I descry a shallop drifting,
Ha, but look! No helmsman's nigh.
Dive in swiftly! No more shifting!
Sylphidine her sails now hie.
Go with faith and go with daring,
Gods accord no note of hand.
But a wonder can thee carry
To the lovely wonderland."

The courageous act concludes and moves beyond the longing, it brings it to a conclusion. And here we come to an

extremely important aspect, which reveals one more aspect why Romantic writings are so much closer to modern soap operas, with all their phony emotions and petty problems, than to real art.

Tieck writes:

"Why does everything have to have an end? Oh, do we begin, only to end again? And which closing is really totally closed? Couldn't the curtain lift again after the last act, and so forth, without end? All end is despotism."

And Dorothea wrote to Friedrich Schlegel:

"What I realized is, that a poem does not need a different ending than a nice day."

Classical art, on the contrary, has a definite inner architecture, and a definite closure, when the development of the poetic idea is included. In Schiller's dramas he always starts with what he calls "the pregnant moment," which contains in a germ form the entire development, then the development takes its course, to finally reach the *punctum saliens*, in which the hero has once again the chance to influence events in a decisive way by either sticking to a fatal flaw, or by correcting it. The fact that the audience can see these options, is what increases the cognitive and emotional capabilities of the audience. And then the drama comes to a necessary end, when the options embedded in the *punctum saliens* are played out. And the subject of Classical drama is not "novelty"—that's the origin of the "novel"—but the poet finds and demonstrates in an historical event a universal idea and an eternal law.

The same applies for poems. In the poem "The Walk," Schiller begins with a walk in actual nature, then he develops the different phases of life and history, to then return to nature on the highest level of freedom.

Or think about the poem "The Artists." Schiller starts by extolling the beautiful image of Man in his time, to then hark to all the many contributing factors throughout universal history, which helped to bring mankind to this point, to then end on the highest point of unity—and now you know, what you were told in the first strophe, but you know it in all its complexity. And the poem is absolutely finished, not one word more would be possible!

Schiller's 'Maid of Orléans'

According to his notes, Schiller started the play *Die Jungfrau von Orléans* [*The Maid of Orléans*—Joan of Arc] on July 1, 1800, and he finished it already in April 1801. It was not only a courageous attack on Voltaire, the Enlightenment, and the degenerated taste of the nobility of his time, it is also a direct, smashing answer to the strange issues promoted by Schlegel, Tieck, and company.

The Maid of Orléans is called a "romantic fairy tale." This subtitle used to always puzzle me. And indeed, the play has all the ingredients that the Romantics used as repertoire: It plays in the Fifteenth Century, which, according to the historical view of the Romantics, was still the Middle Ages, in which

religious devotion plays a major role. And you have what you could call a Romantic figure in the weak and unmanly Dauphin (the future King), who prefers to fantasize about the past rather than lead on the battlefield and save France from the occupying and attacking English.

The way the Dauphin describes his goals, is really Schiller getting the Romantics on the hook, by describing exactly their utopia.

Charles: “That is a joke, a cheerful game, a feast,
Which he gives to himself and his own heart,
To found himself an innocent pure world
In this barbaric, harsh reality.
Yet what he that is great and regal wants —
He wants to bring again the ancient times,
When tender courtly love did rule, when love
Did lift the great heroic heart o’ th’ knight
And noble ladies sat in judgment seats,
With gentle sense all subtleties resolving.
In former ages dwells the gay old man,
And as they still in olden ballads live,
So would he set it up on earth, just like
A heav’nly city in the golden clouds.
Established hath he there a court of love,
Whereto the noble knights shall go as pilgrims,
Where ladies chaste shall be in glory throned,
Where purest courtly love shall come again,
And he hath me selected prince of love.”

And naturally, while he indulges in this retrogressive fantasy, new catastrophes occur in the real world, and the existence of France is in mortal danger.

But then, Johanna intervenes, completely filled with an almost mystical devotion to the great task given to her by God: to save France. In a completely potent way, she de facto takes over the leadership of the army and leads it from victory to victory. However, when she violates her oath, to only follow divine love, and not feel earthly love for a man, she temporarily loses her inner strength. She becomes unsure, loses faith in her mission, and falls into the hands of the English.

But then, when she sees the fate of France again in danger, she mobilizes the strength to free herself and again intervenes decisively in the battle. Very unromantic, but very Classical.

Schiller makes clear, that if you take the divine will as your own, if you become the instrument of world history, you can intervene and change it.

Again, you see the principle of Classical composition: The “virgin” starts with an idyllic situation, and in a simple way she follows her devotion. Then, her feelings get into conflict with the command. She fights it through, and in the end, you have an idyllic situation on a higher plane in freedom. What was necessity has become freedom.

Schiller was pleased with his work. On April 3, 1801,

he wrote to Goethe: “Of my last act, I expect a lot of good, it explains the first. . . . Because my heroine is standing alone in it, and since she was abandoned by the gods in her misery before, now her independence and the cohesion of her character with her role as a prophet is demonstrated more clearly.”

By acting on the basis of necessity, an existing conflict can be overcome, and a solution be found on a higher geometry where no conflict exists.

Today: Worse than the 1930s

When you look around in our present-day culture, modern literature is almost entirely Romantic, the content of movies mostly features the dark side of human nature, the insane, the criminal, the morbid. The soap operas are never-ending “romantic” sagas, no necessary beginning, and unfortunately no end. According to the way people think, it is okay to just live out their feeling-states without regard for reason; the right to have “your opinion,” without regard for Truth and Justice; the right to keep your neuroses, as long as nobody interferes; and so on and so on. If you consider how thoroughly the ruling elite and their minions in academia and cultural life have eradicated the European Greek Classical identity as the foundation of the Italian Renaissance and the German Classics, and how efficiently almost every object of life is determined by Romantic, basically sick characteristics, you come to the conclusion, that we are today in much worse shape, than in the 1930s.

Both from the standpoint of the state of the financial system, the situation is much worse than it was then, but also, from the standpoint of the cultural resistance against the danger of a new facism. How many people are close to insanity, in the way I described the axioms of Romantic values? How many people today think that it is all right, that the health-care system should be privatized, or think that the people in Africa cannot be saved anyway, and that it is all right for them to die? That is fascism. People who think like that, have lost what makes them human.

What is the solution? It is exactly what Lyn said: Only if the majority of the population very quickly learns how to think Classically, can catastrophe be avoided. It is not so difficult, because all the treasures of European civilization, and of world culture for that matter, are there. You can consult Confucius, on how to bring a deranged society to order. You can study Socratic reason in Plato. St. Augustine will tell you all about the degeneracies of world empires; Nicholas of Cusa will bring you up to the level of the *concordantia oppositorum*. With Leibniz, you can figure out why, indeed, we are living in the best of all possible worlds. Lessing and Mendelssohn will teach you beauty and ecumenical thinking. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert will elevate your soul. And Schiller will make you free.

So, think like Schiller, act like Johanna, and be your true self as a human being!